

RSC Communicable and Respiratory Disease Report for England

Key Statistics:

Week Number/Year..... 4/2024
 Week Starting - Ending..... 22/01/2024 - 28/01/2024
 No. of Practices..... 1,694
 Population..... 17,148,209

National (England)

- **Acute Respiratory Infections:** increased from **337.0** in week 3 to **375.5** in week 4.
- **Influenza-like illness:** increased from **7.5** in week 3 to **9.8** in week 4.
- **Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease:** increased from **15.2** in week 3 to **15.3** in week 4.
- **Lower Respiratory Tract Infections:** increased from **126.2** in week 3 to **128.2** in week 4.
- **Upper Respiratory Tract Infections:** increased from **193.2** in week 3 to **228.4** in week 4.
- **COVID-19:** increased from **11.5** in week 3 to **12.2** in week 4.

Regional (North, South, London and Midlands and East)

- **Acute Respiratory Infections:** increased from **248.0** in week 3 to **279.0** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **427.8** in week 3 to **465.6** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **306.5** in week 3 to **352.4** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **352.8** in week 3 to **388.1** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Influenza-like illness:** increased from **7.7** in week 3 to **10.3** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **8.6** in week 3 to **10.7** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **7.7** in week 3 to **10.4** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **5.8** in week 3 to **7.6** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease:** decreased from **9.2** in week 3 to **8.4** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **21.5** in week 3 to **22.8** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **12.5** in week 3 to **12.6** in week 4 in the South region, and decreased from **17.1** in week 3 to **16.6** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Lower Respiratory Tract Infections:** was unchanged at **77.1** in week 3 and **77.1** in week 4 in the London region, decreased from **178.6** in week 3 to **173.4** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **112.6** in week 3 to **121.6** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **128.0** in week 3 to **129.6** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **Upper Respiratory Tract Infections:** increased from **156.5** in week 3 to **186.1** in week 4 in the London region, increased from **232.1** in week 3 to **274.0** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **175.1** in week 3 to **208.9** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **205.9** in week 3 to **240.5** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.
- **COVID-19:** decreased from **7.6** in week 3 to **7.4** in week 4 in the London region, decreased from **13.3** in week 3 to **12.8** in week 4 in the North region, increased from **12.8** in week 3 to **15.1** in week 4 in the South region, and increased from **11.0** in week 3 to **11.6** in week 4 in the Midlands And East region.

Comment:

Overall presentations of acute respiratory infections (ARI) have increased this week though they remain a little below seasonal levels for this time of year except for the North (page 6). ARI presentations have increased in all regions and age bands except the 65 years and older age band.

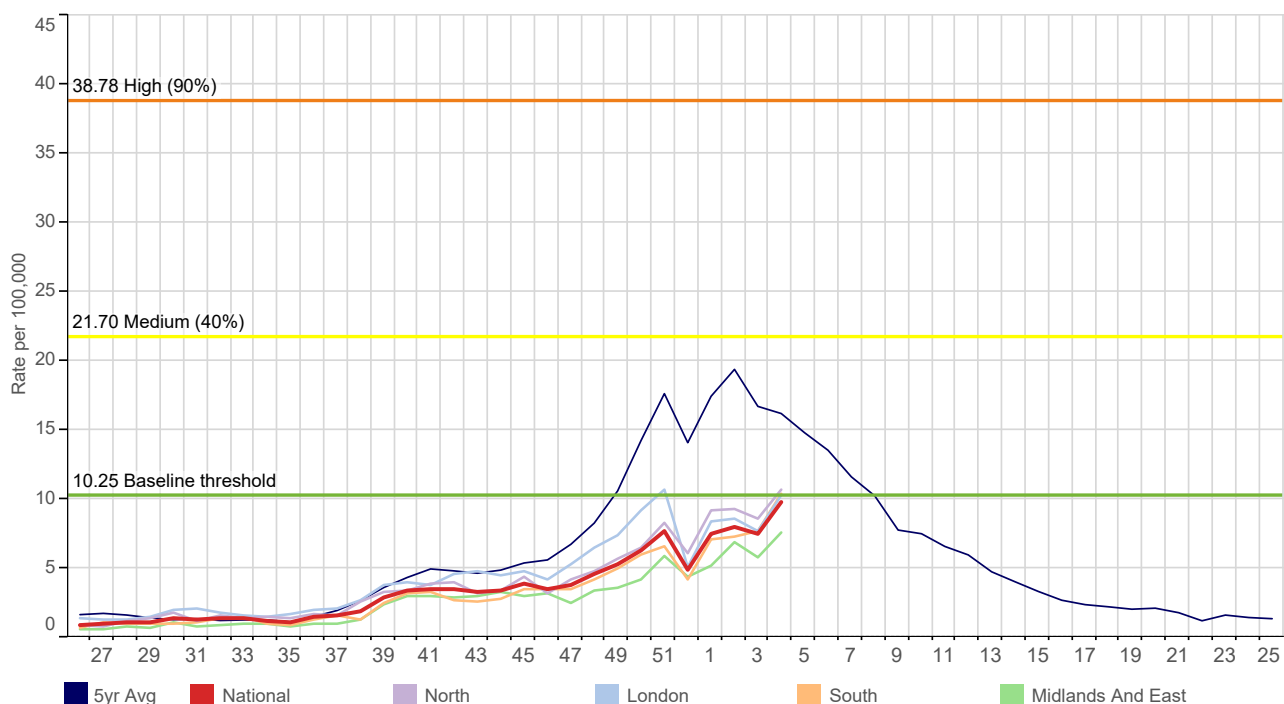
Rates have increased nationally for influenza-like illness (ILI) (pages 2 and 3), acute bronchitis and bronchiolitis combined (page 4) and COVID-19 (page 5). Measles rates are above the seasonal average in all regions except the South with the highest rates in the Midlands and East (page 14). Rates of scabies have decreased though they remain above the seasonal norm (page 15).

This report includes a respiratory virology update. Influenza, SARS-CoV-2 and RSV are the predominant circulating viruses detected by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) Reference Virology Lab.

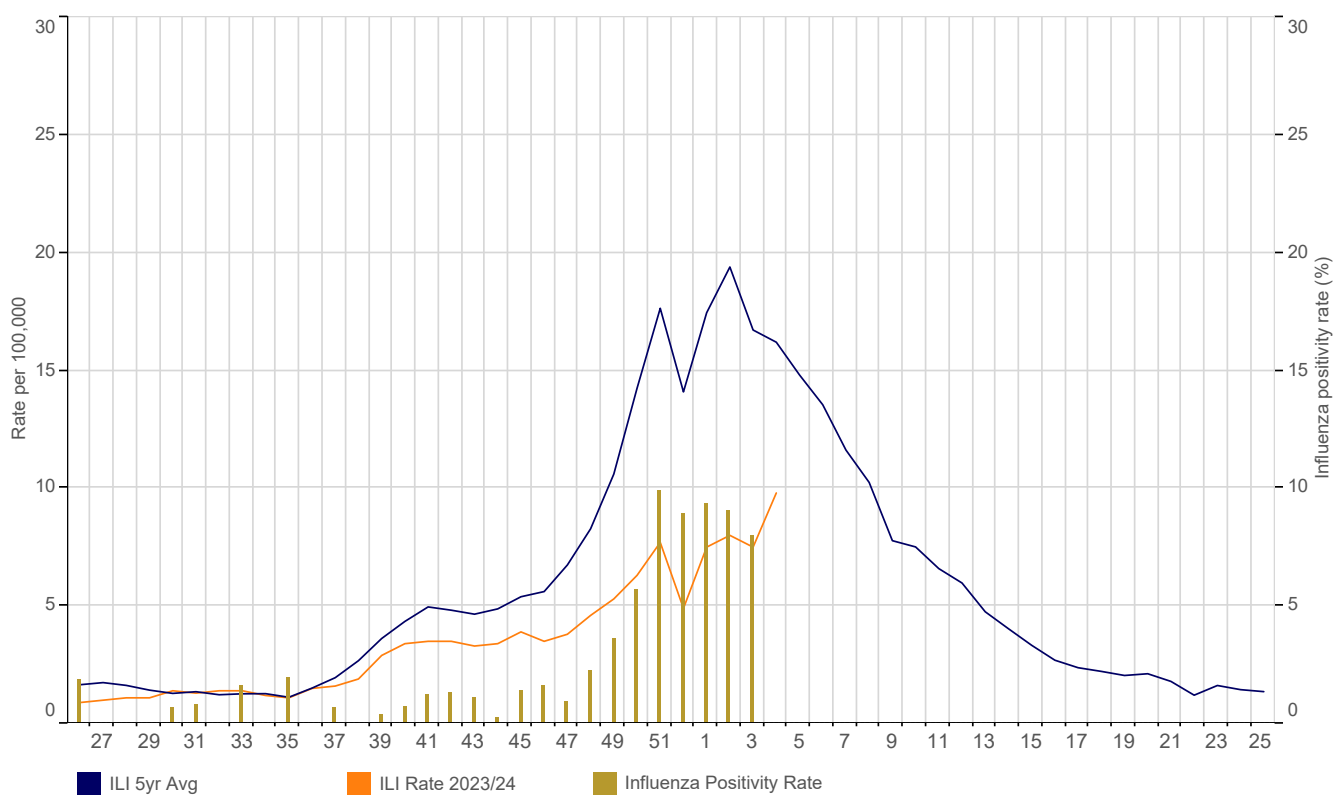
2023/24 Focus

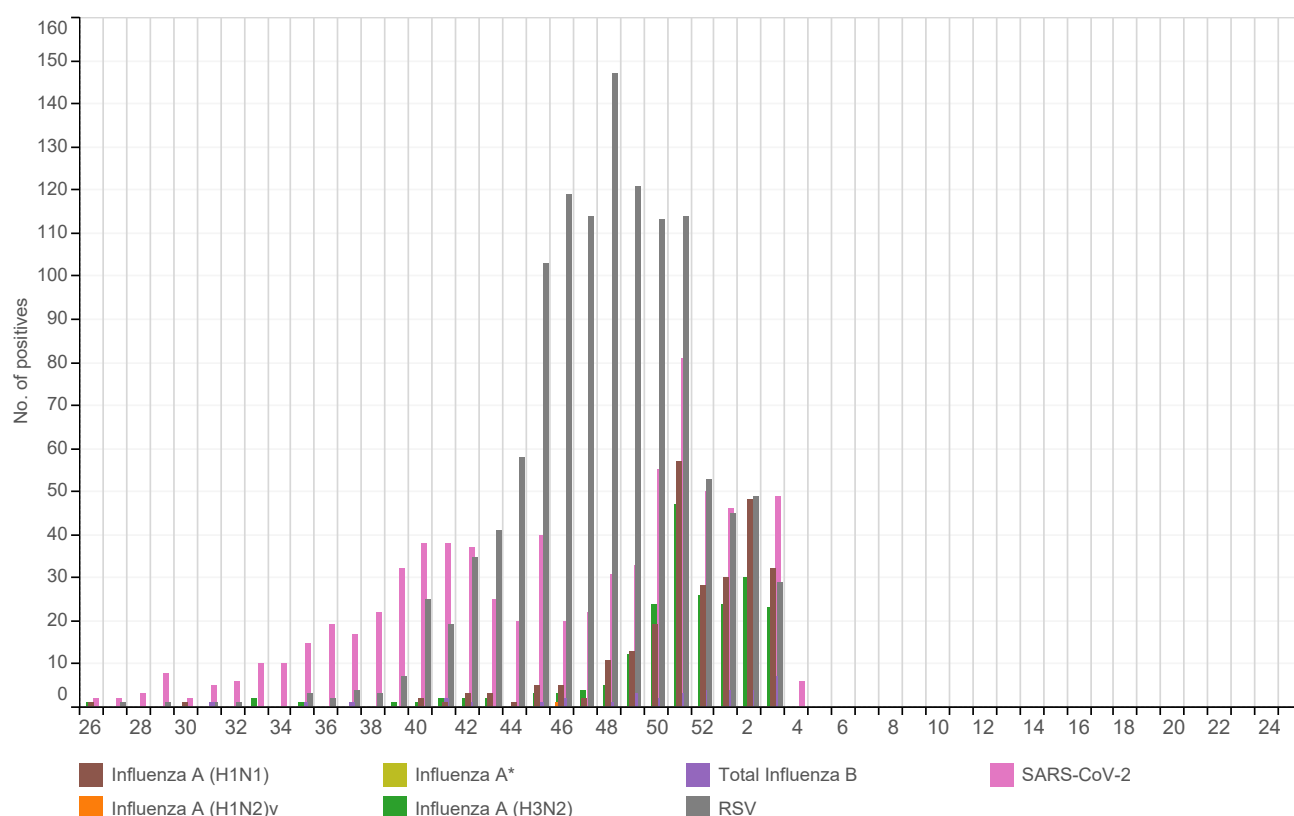
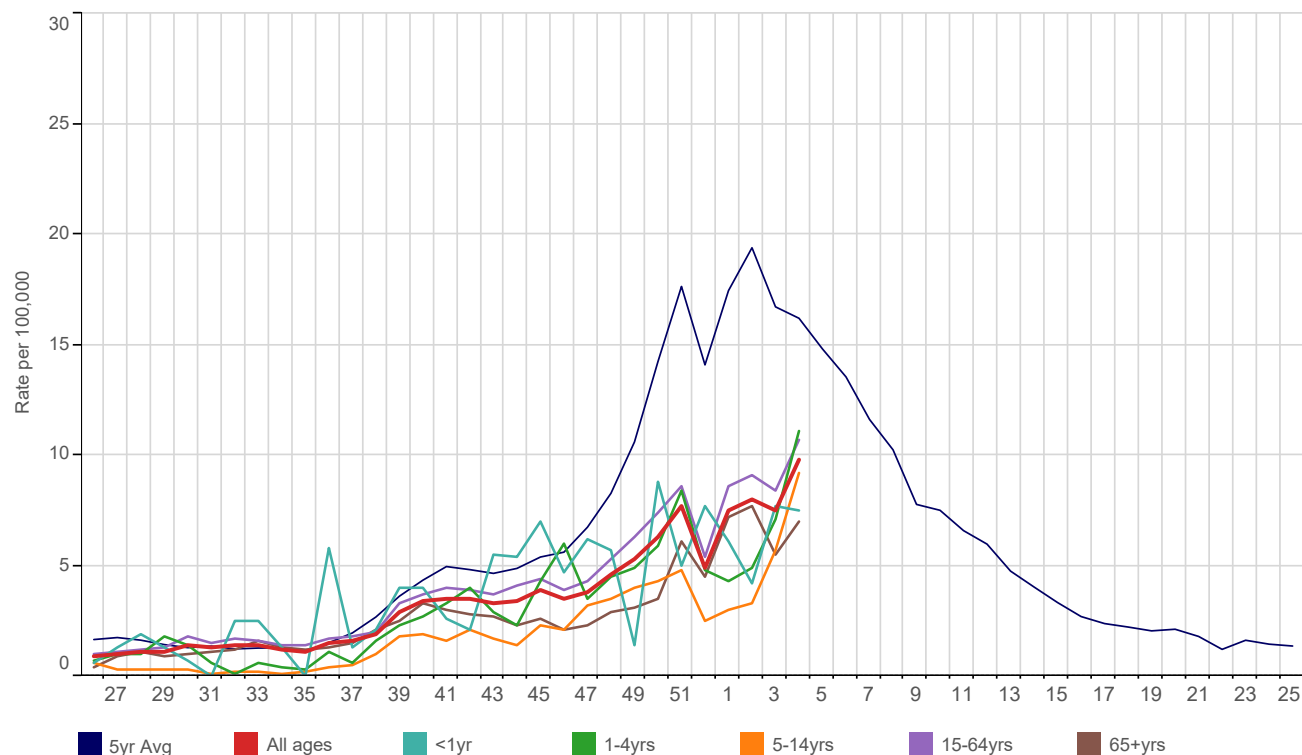
Please see page 19 for explanatory notes on the data.

(A) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate 2023/24 by region



(B) RCGP/UKHSA Influenza Virology Swab Surveillance 2023/24



(C) RCGP/UKHSA RSV, Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 Virology Swab Surveillance 2023/24 by viral strain**(D) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate 2023/24 by age band**

(E) Influenza-like illness: national incidence rate 2023/24 by age band

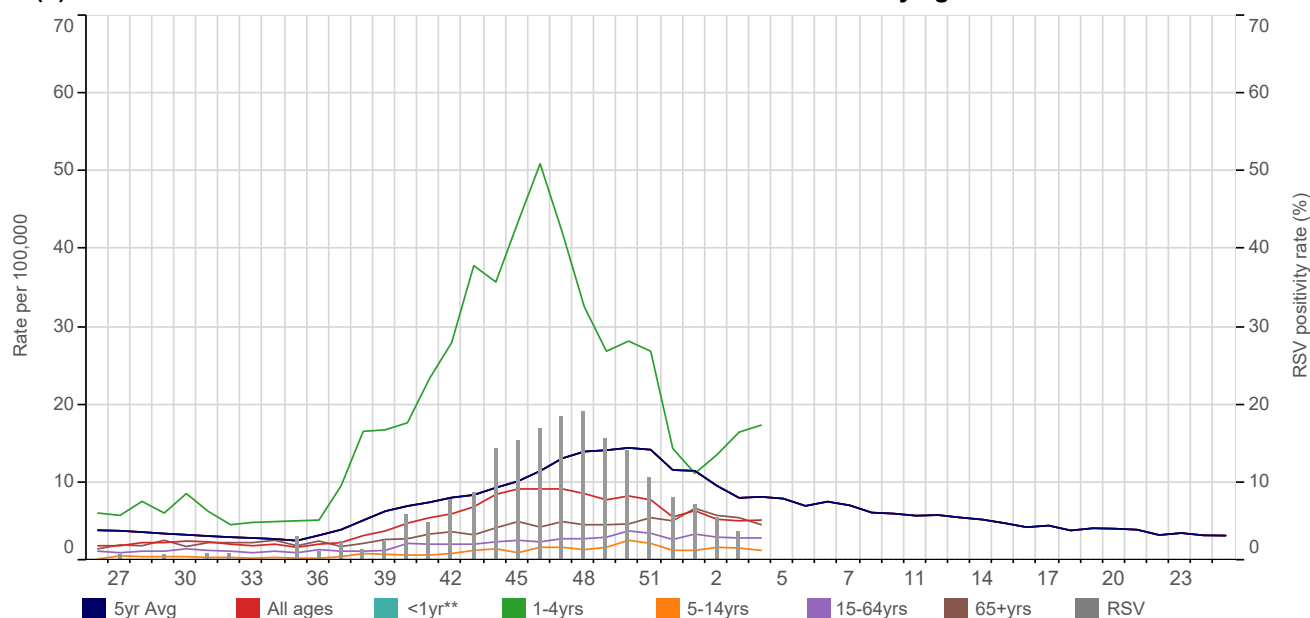
This table shows the level of intensity of ILI by age band. MEM thresholds have been calculated separately for each age band - the ranges are shown in the table Threshold levels by age band.

Table 1	26	27	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43
1-4yrs	0.7	1.0	1.0	1.8	1.4	0.6	0.1	0.6	0.4	0.3	1.1	0.6	1.6	2.3	2.7	3.3	4.0	2.9
5-14yrs	0.6	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.4	0.5	1.0	1.8	1.9	1.6	2.1	1.7
15-64yrs	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.8	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.4	1.4	1.7	1.8	2.0	3.3	3.7	4.0	3.9	3.7
65+yrs	0.4	0.9	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.6	1.3	1.2	1.3	1.5	2.1	2.5	3.3	3.0	2.8	2.7
All ages	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.3	1.4	1.4	1.2	1.1	1.5	1.6	1.9	2.9	3.4	3.5	3.5	3.3

	44	45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1-4yrs	2.3	4.3	6.0	3.5	4.5	4.9	5.9	8.4	4.8	4.3	4.9	7.1	11.1					
5-14yrs	1.4	2.3	2.1	3.2	3.5	4.0	4.3	4.8	2.5	3.0	3.3	5.7	9.2					
15-64yrs	4.1	4.4	3.9	4.3	5.3	6.3	7.4	8.6	5.4	8.6	9.1	8.4	10.7					
65+yrs	2.3	2.6	2.1	2.3	2.9	3.1	3.5	6.1	4.5	7.2	7.7	5.5	7.0					
All ages	3.4	3.9	3.5	3.8	4.6	5.3	6.3	7.7	4.9	7.5	8.0	7.5	9.8					

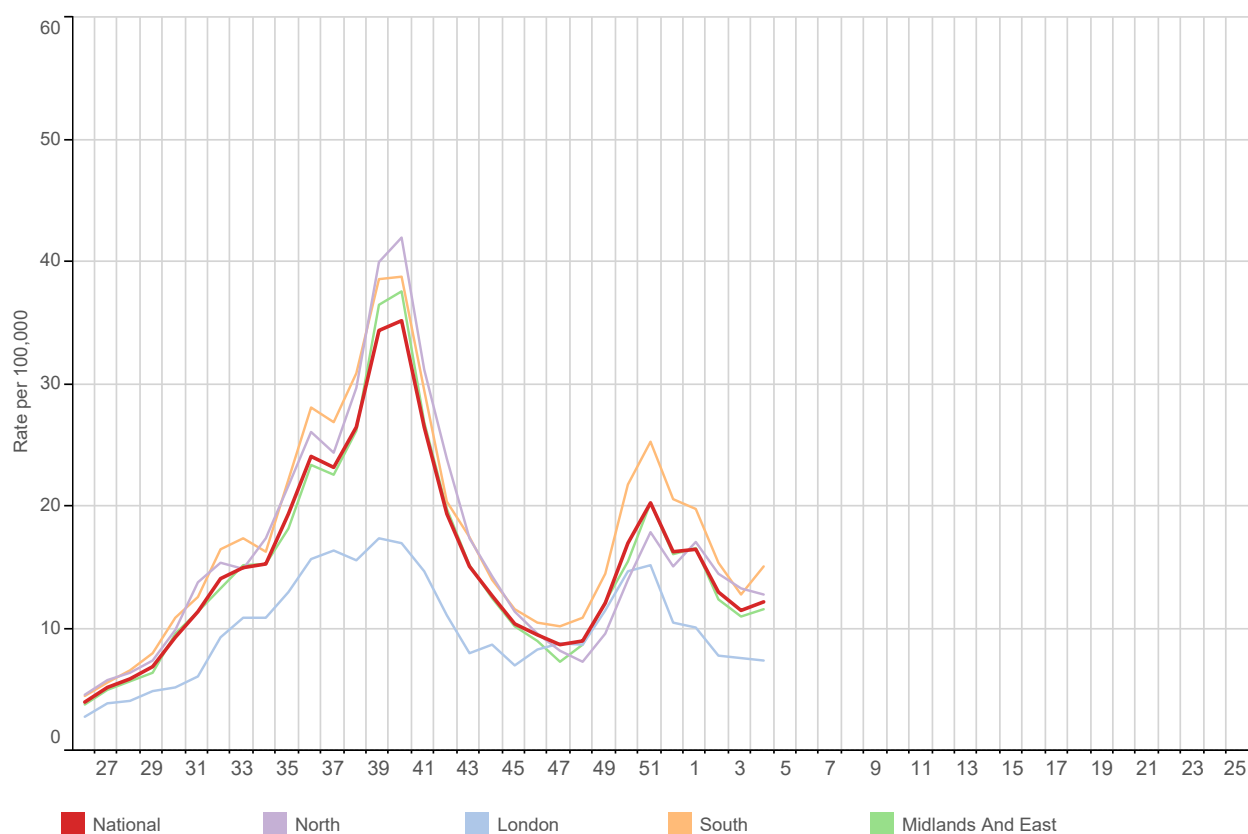
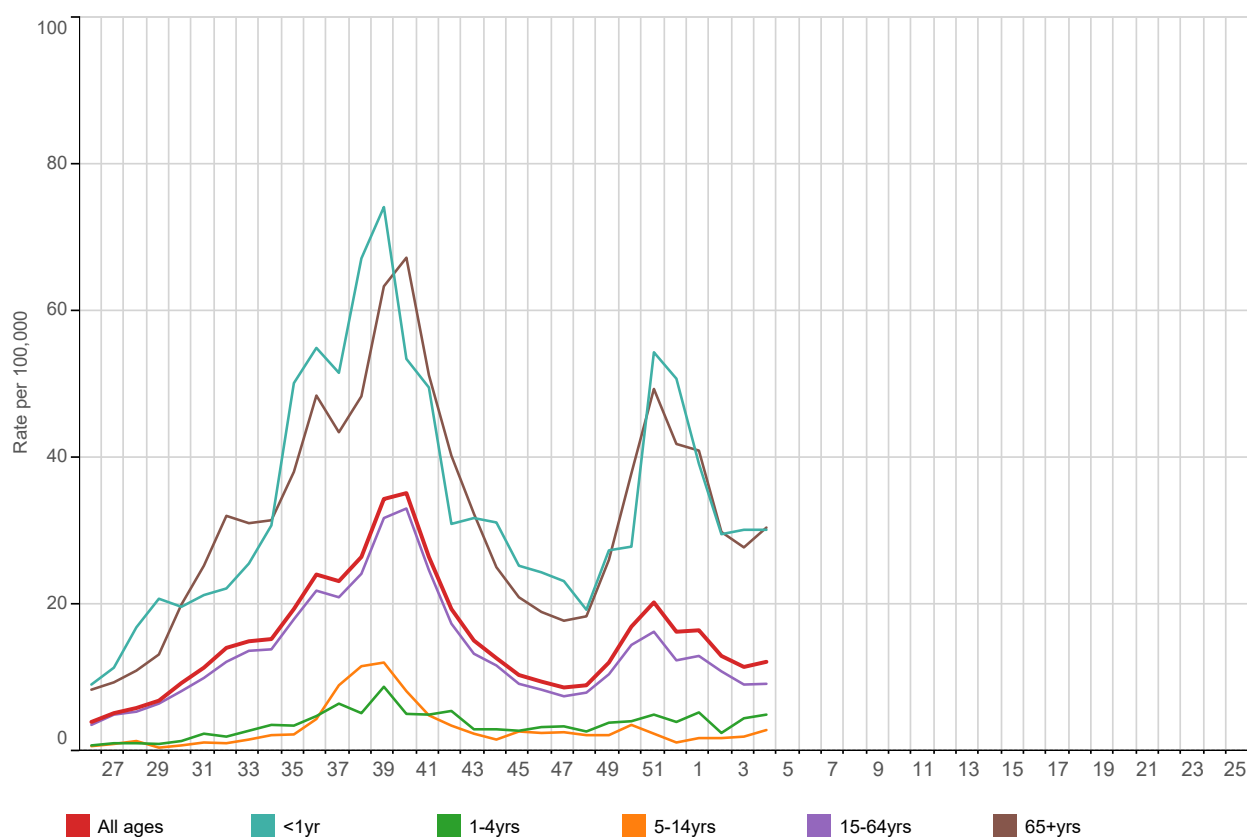
Table 2	Below Threshold ¹	Threshold to Medium ²	Medium to High ³	High to Very High ⁴	Above Very High ⁵
1-4yrs	<8.05	8.05 to 15.57	15.58 to 23.50	23.51 to 28.19	28.20+
5-14yrs	<6.53	6.53 to 15.55	15.56 to 32.18	32.19 to 44.39	44.40+
15-64yrs	<12.23	12.23 to 24.53	24.54 to 45.08	45.09 to 58.99	59.00+
65+yrs	<9.62	9.62 to 16.69	16.70 to 35.98	35.99 to 50.52	50.53+
All Ages	<10.25	10.25 to 21.69	21.70 to 38.77	38.78 to 50.11	50.12+

Threshold levels
¹Below baseline threshold
²baseline threshold breach to < 40th percentile
³40th to <90th percentile
⁴90th to <97.5th percentile
⁵97.5th+ percentile

(F) Acute Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis: national incidence rate 2023/24 by age band**Weekly Influenza-like illness and Acute Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis incidence rates per 100,000 persons**

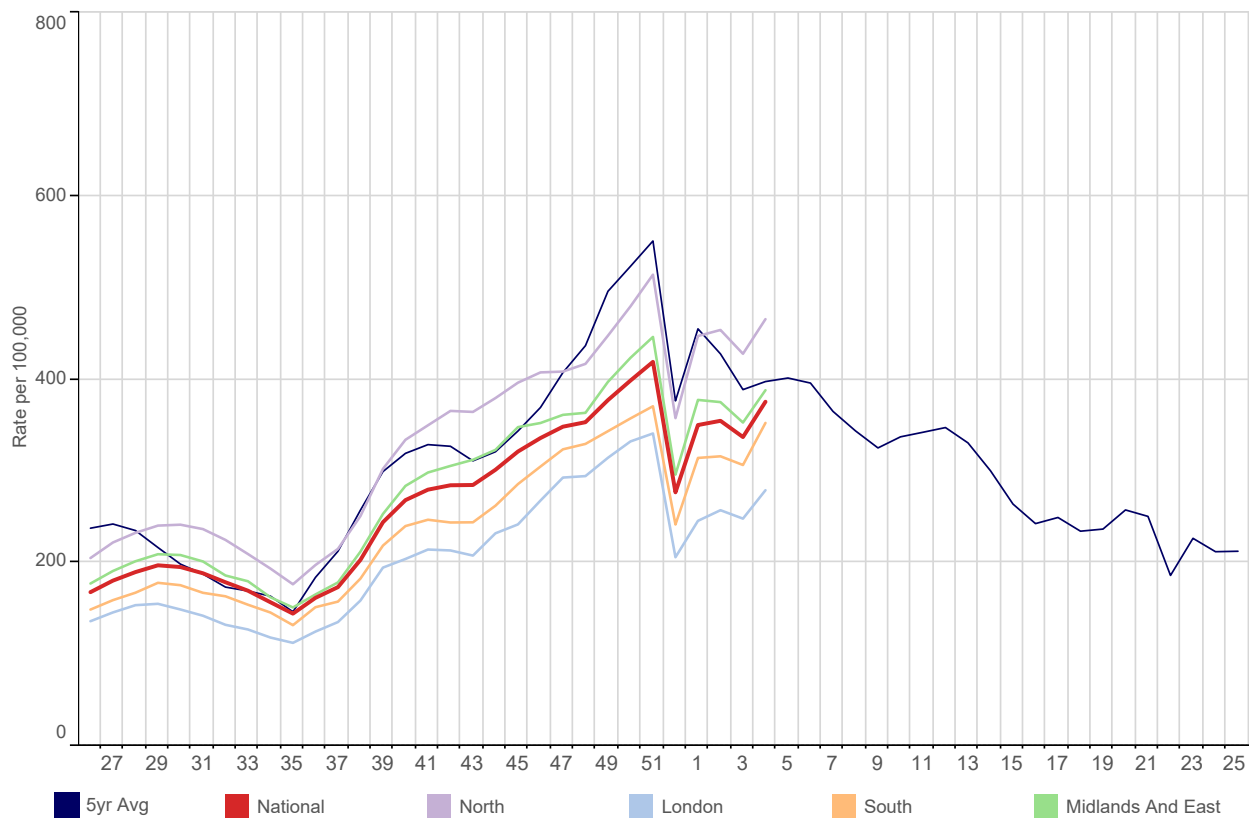
Influenza-like illness		Acute Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis		Influenza-like illness		Acute Bronchitis and Bronchiolitis	
<1yr	7.5	190.1		London	10.3	3.2	
1-4yrs	11.1	17.4		North	10.7	5.9	
5-14yrs	9.2	1.3		South	10.4	5.8	
15-24yrs	8.8	1.4		Midlands And East	7.6	5.2	
25-44yrs	11.9	2.7		National	9.8	5.2	
45-64yrs	10.1	3.9					
65-74yrs	5.1	4.1					
75-84yrs	6.9	5.4					
85+yrs	14.3	4.1					
All ages	9.8	5.2					

**The <1yr age band is not presented (Graph F).

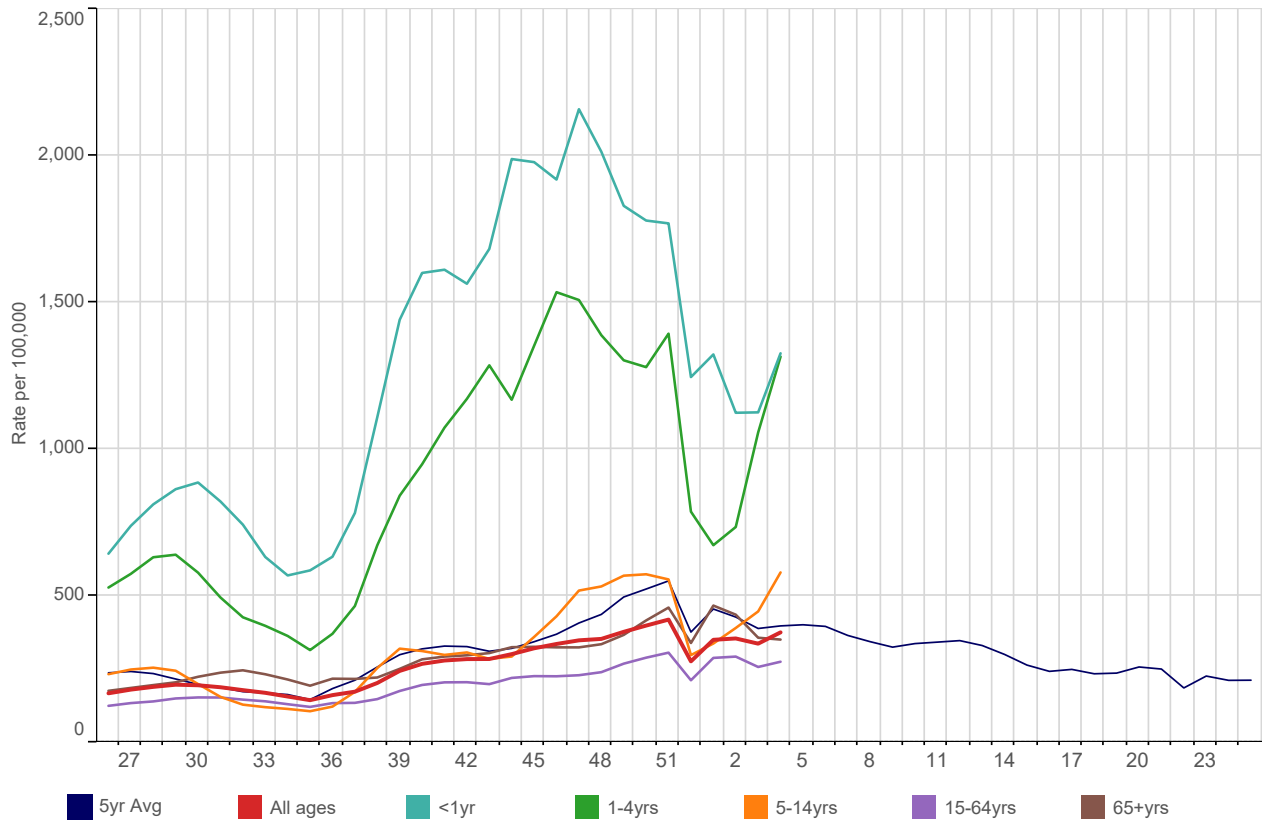
(G) COVID-19: national incidence rate 2023/24 by region**(H) COVID-19: national incidence rate 2023/24 by age band**

1. Respiratory Infections

(I) Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI): national incidence rate 2023/24 by region



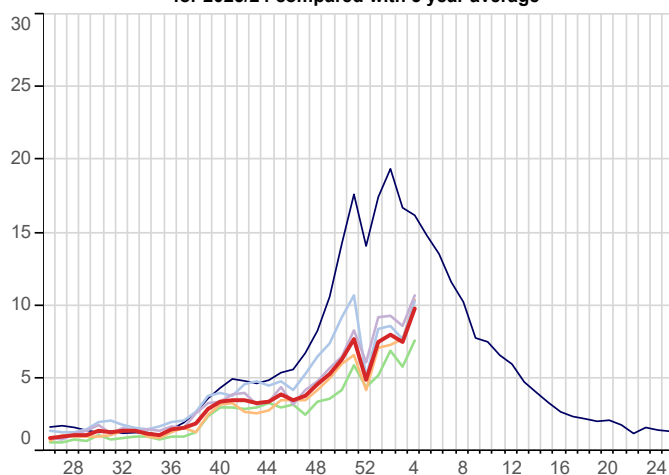
(J) Acute Respiratory Infections (ARI): national incidence rate 2023/24 by age band



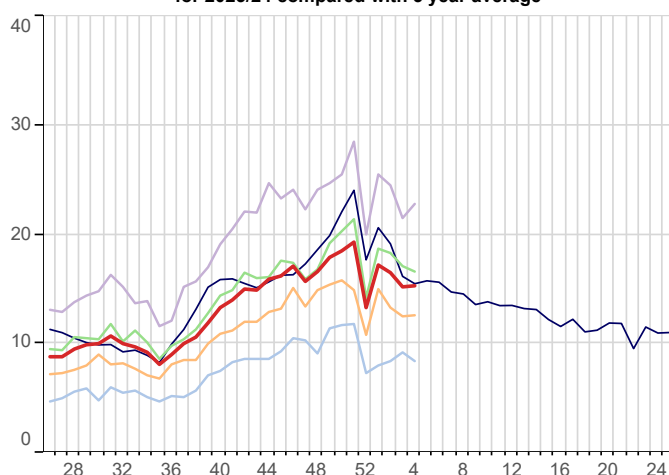
1. Respiratory Infections - *by region*

5yr Avg National South
 North Midlands And East
 London

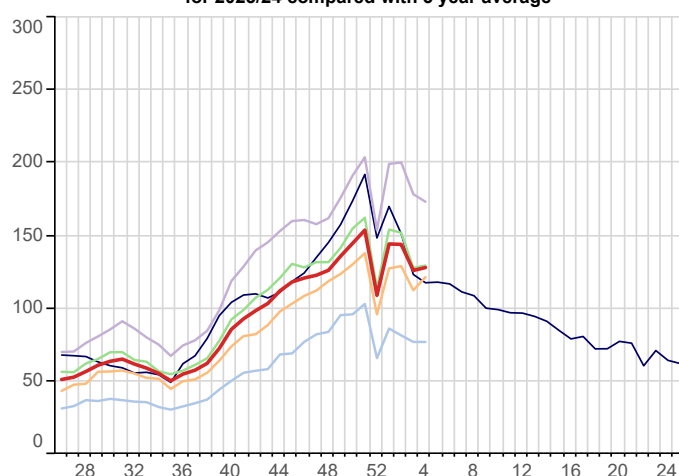
Influenza-like illness (ILI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

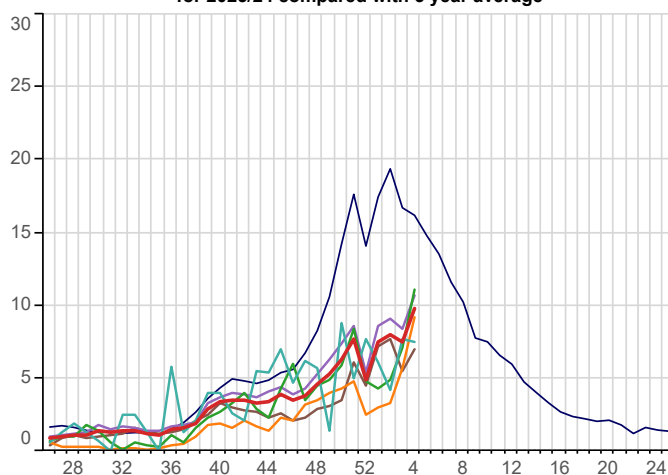


Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

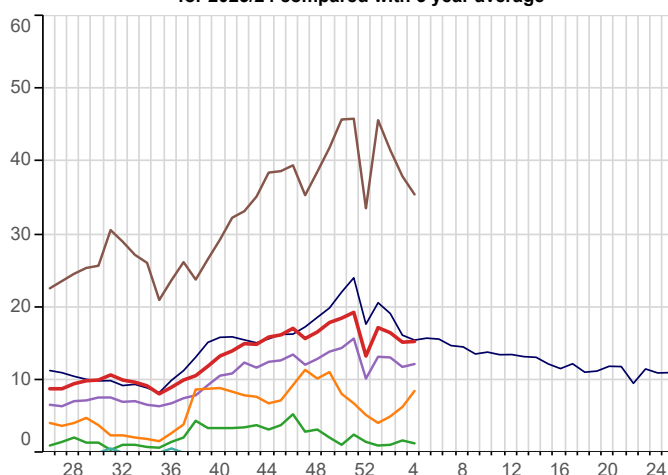
1. Respiratory Infections - *by age band*

5yr Avg All ages 5-14yrs
 <1yr 15-64yrs
 1-4yrs 65+yrs

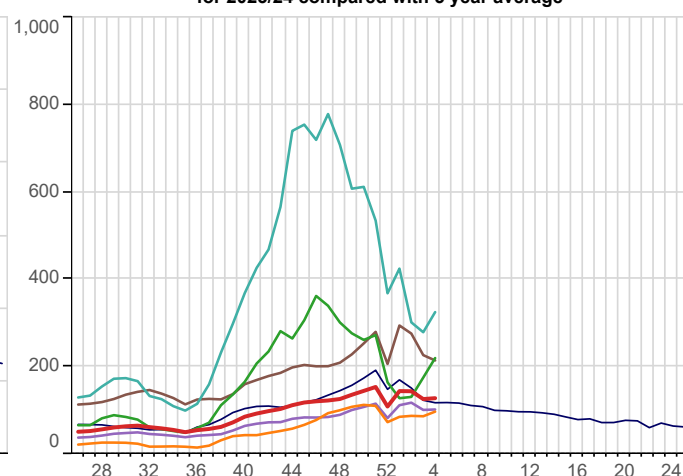
Influenza-like illness (ILI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



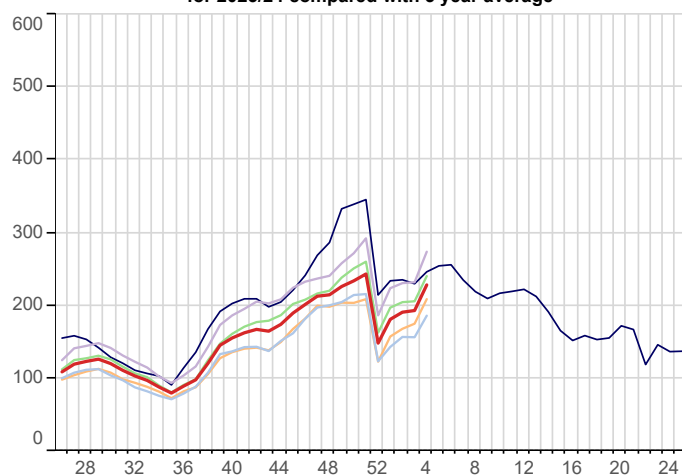
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



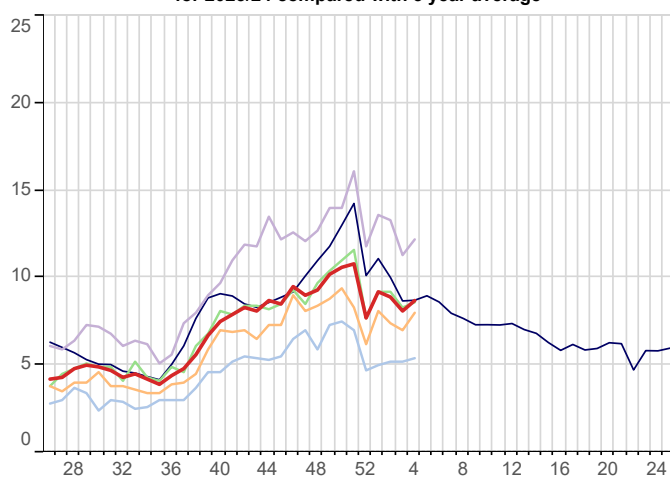
1. Respiratory Infections - *by region*

5yr Avg National South
 North Midlands And East
 London

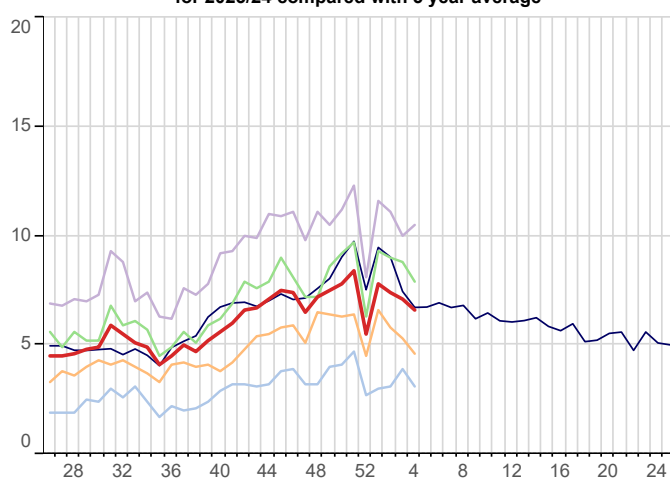
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD) - Asthma Exacerbations
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

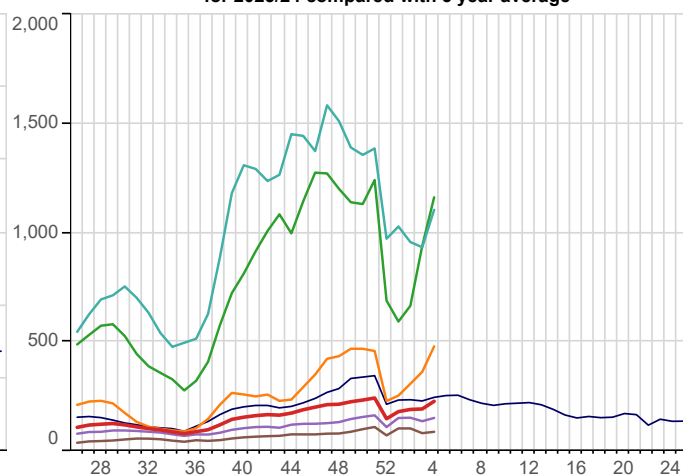


Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD) - COPD Exacerbations
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

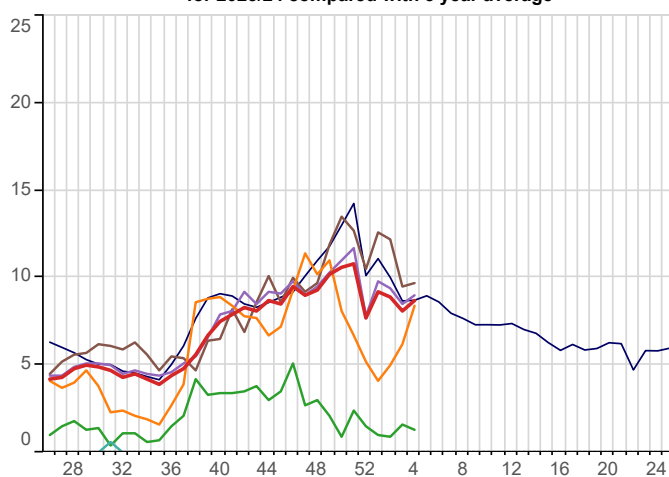
1. Respiratory Infections - *by age band*

5yr Avg All ages 5-14yrs
 <1yr 15-64yrs
 1-4yrs 65+yrs

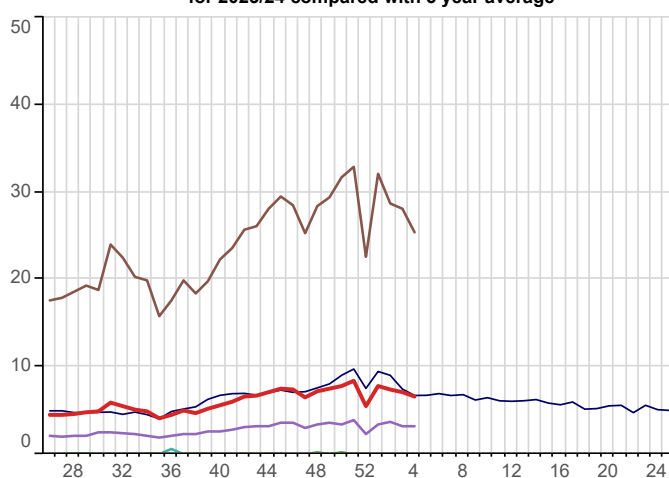
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI)
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD) - Asthma Exacerbations
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

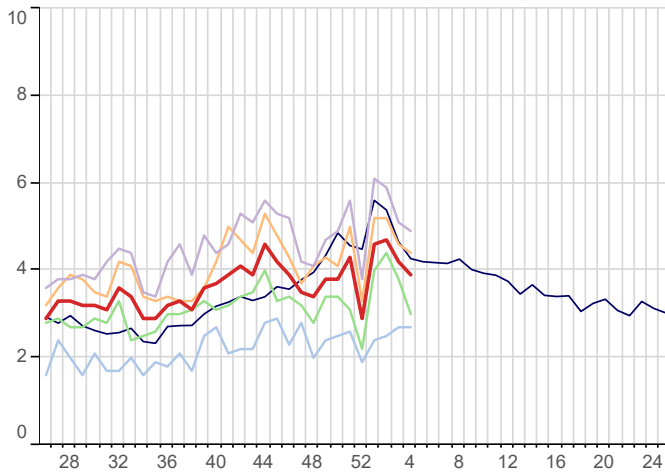


Exacerbations of Chronic Lung Disease (ECLD) - COPD Exacerbations
 Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
 for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

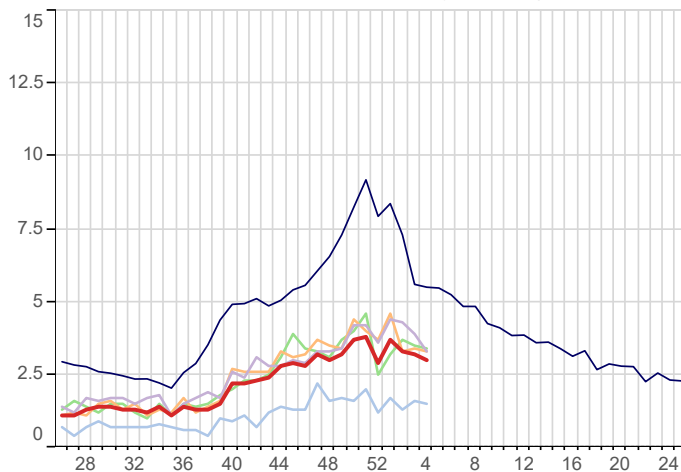


1. Respiratory Infections - *by region*

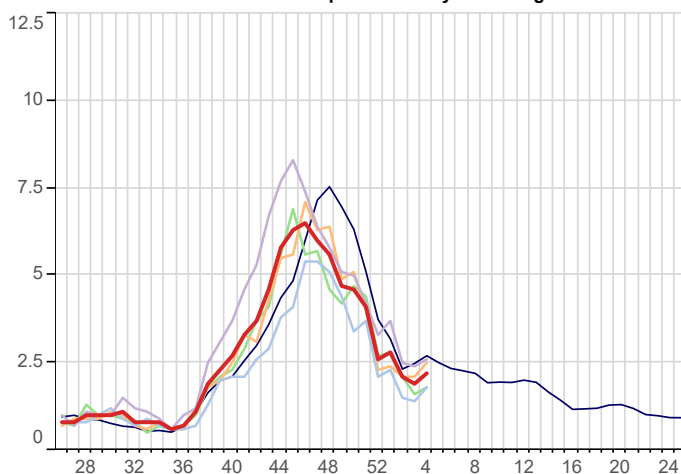
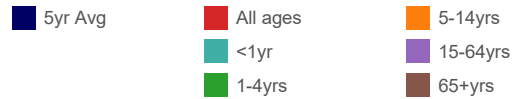
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



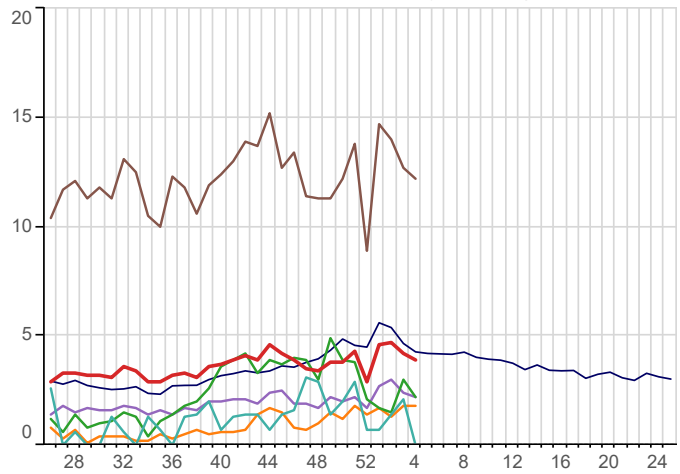
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



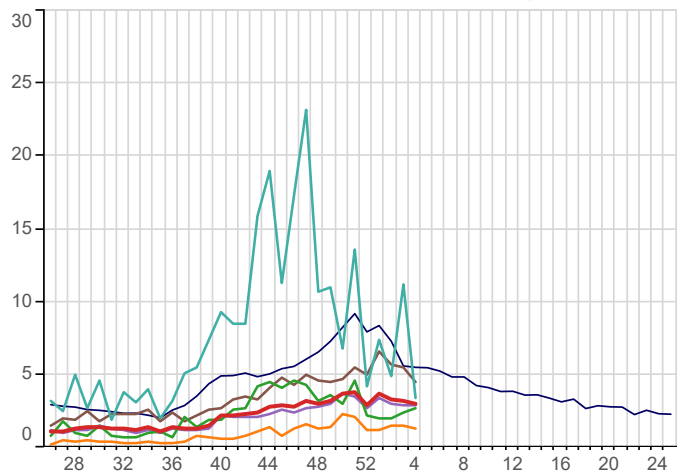
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

1. Respiratory Infections - *by age band*

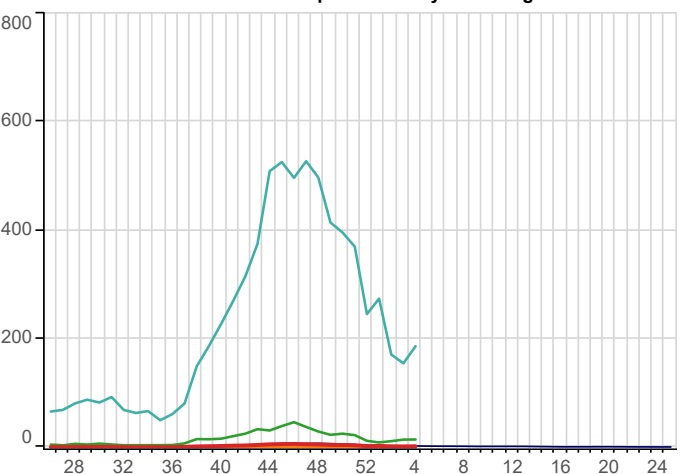
Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Pneumonia
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Acute Bronchitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

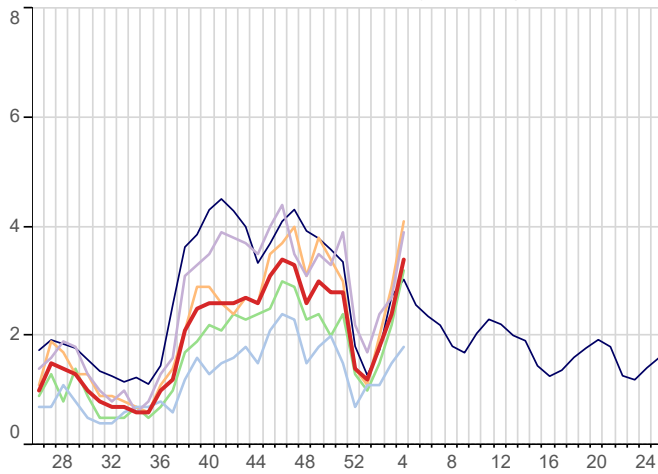


Lower Respiratory Tract Infections (LRTI) - Bronchiolitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

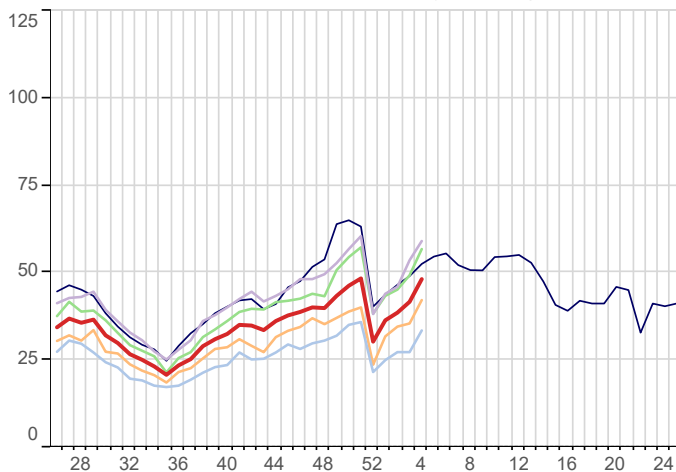


1. Respiratory Infections - *by region*

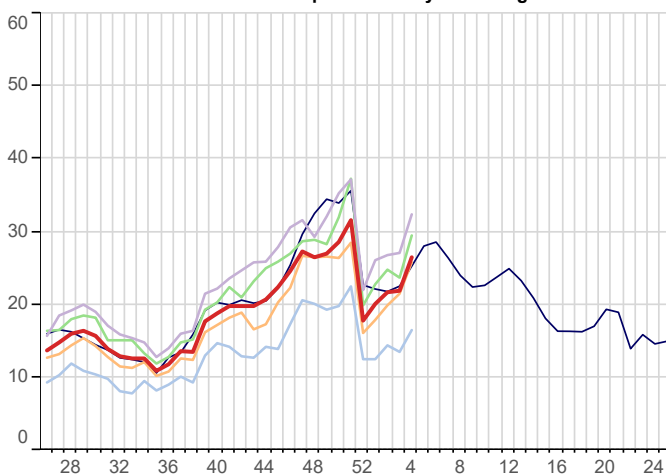
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



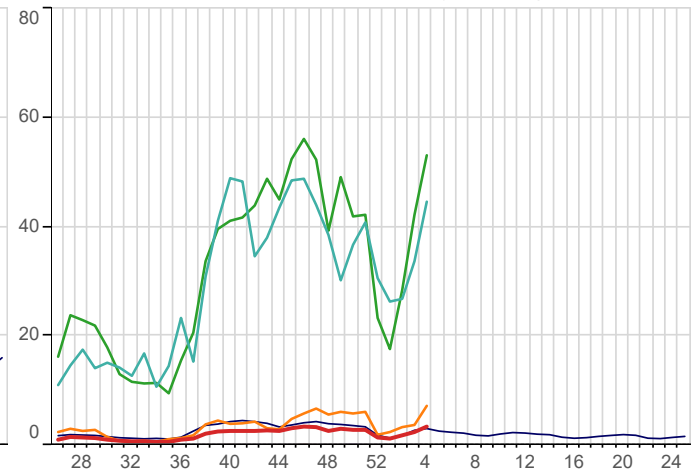
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



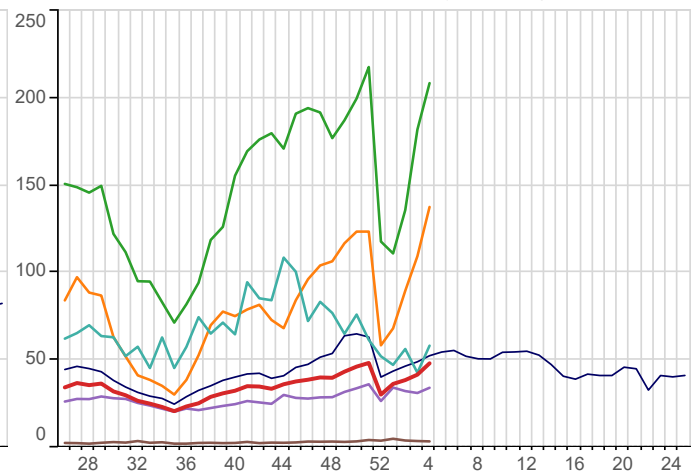
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

1. Respiratory Infections - *by age band*

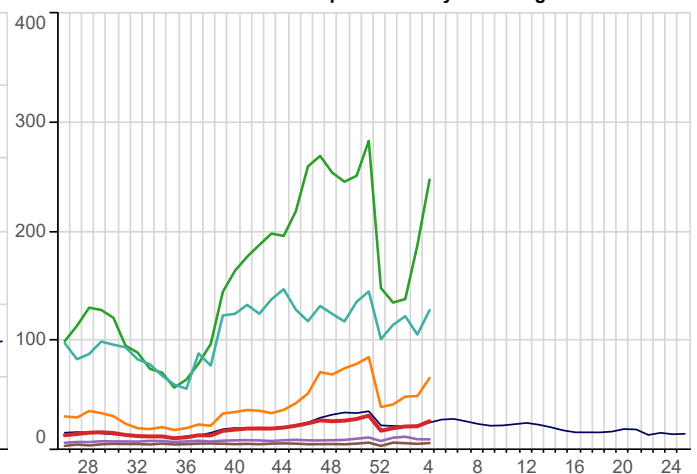
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Croup
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



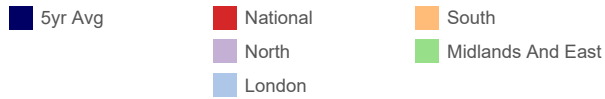
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Otitis Media
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all regions) by age band
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



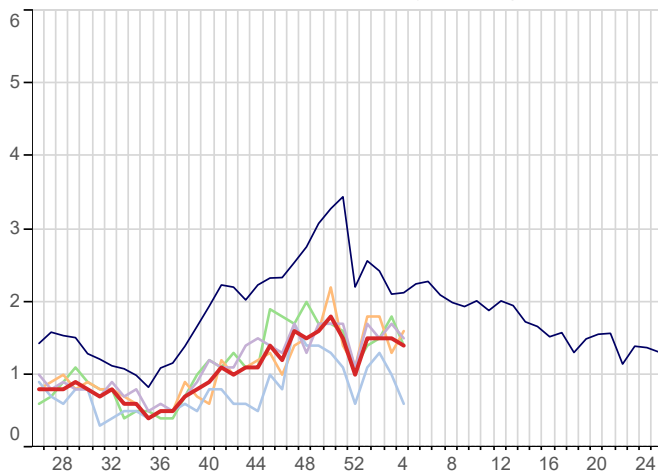
1. Respiratory Infections - *by region*



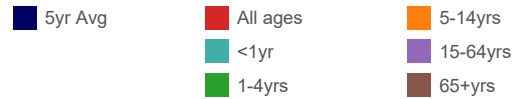
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



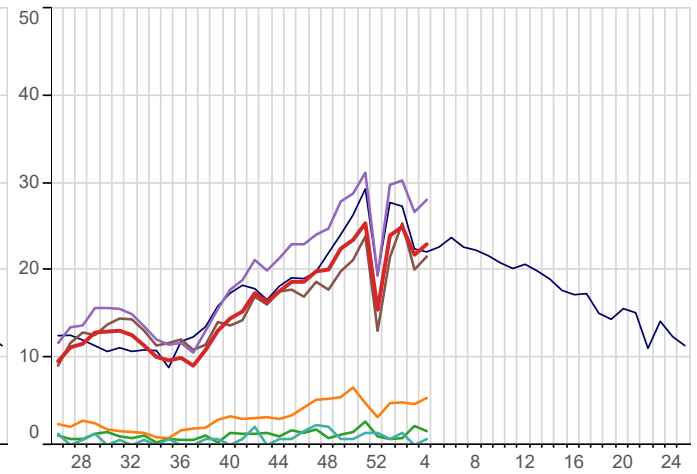
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



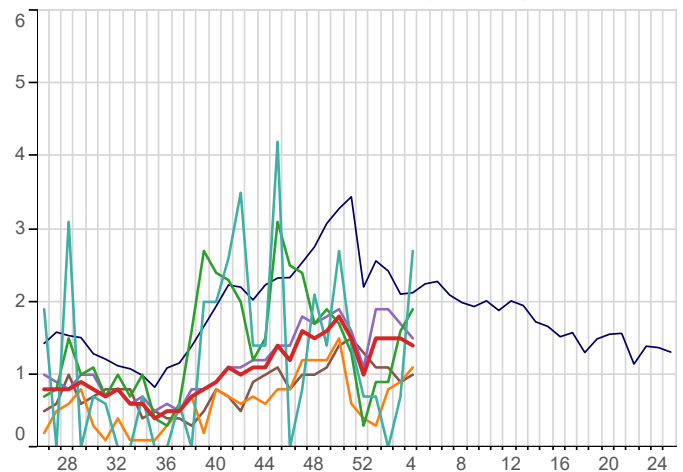
1. Respiratory Infections - *by age band*



Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Sinusitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



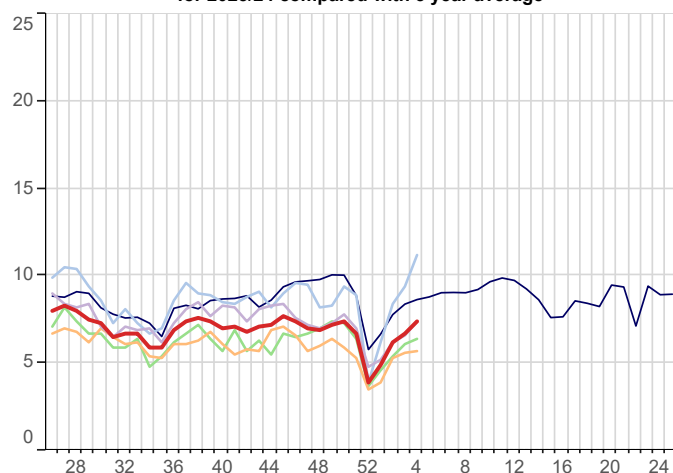
Upper Respiratory Tract Infections (URTI) - Laryngitis
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



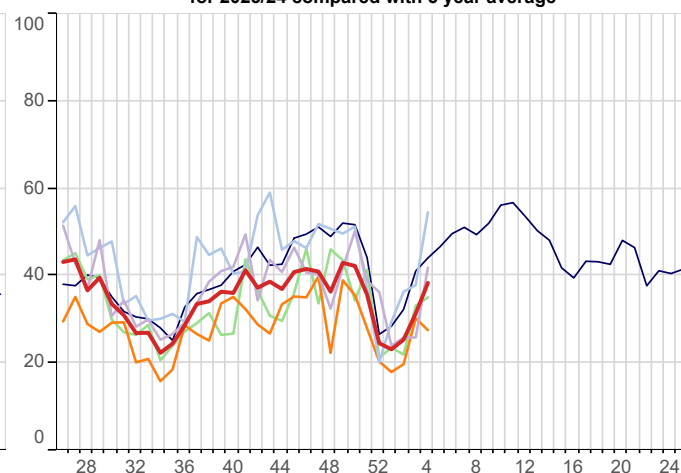
2. Water & Food Borne Disorders

■ 5yr Avg ■ National ■ North ■ London ■ South ■ Midlands And East

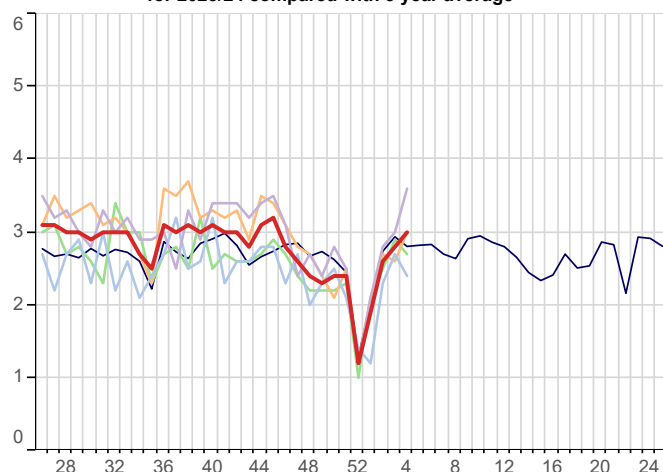
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



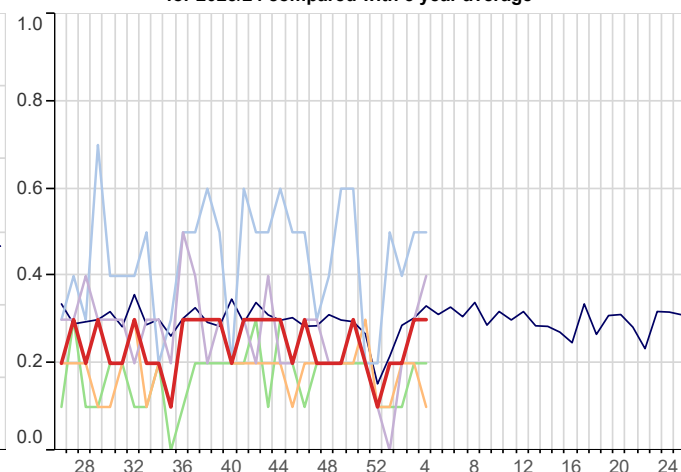
Infectious Intestinal Disease (ICD10: A00-A09)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **0-4 years**) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Non-Infective Enteritis & Colitis (ICD10: K50-K52)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



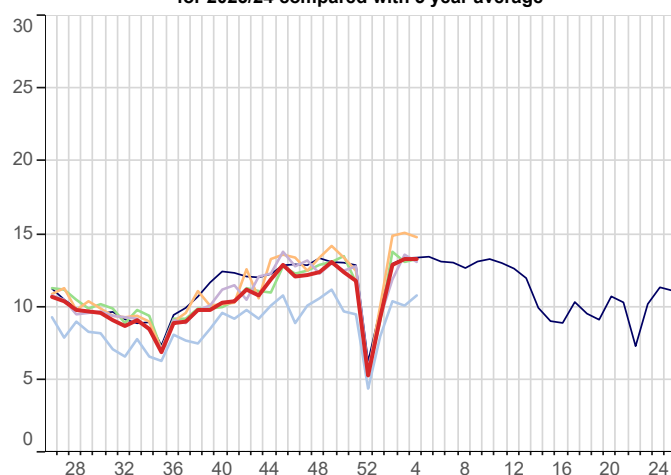
Viral Hepatitis (ICD10: B15-B19)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 **all ages**) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



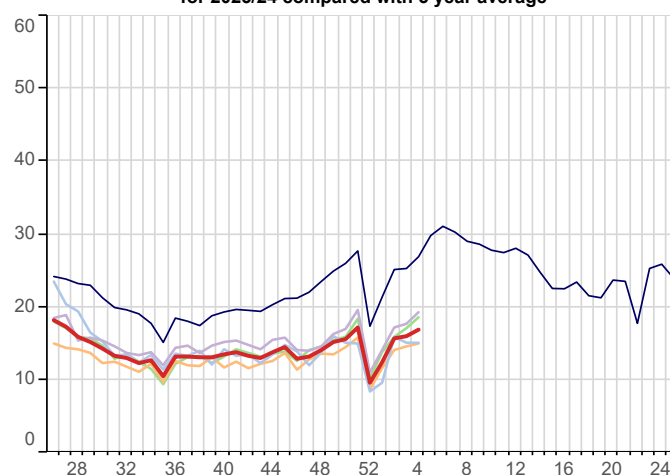
3. Environmentally Sensitive Disorders

5yr Avg National North London South Midlands And East

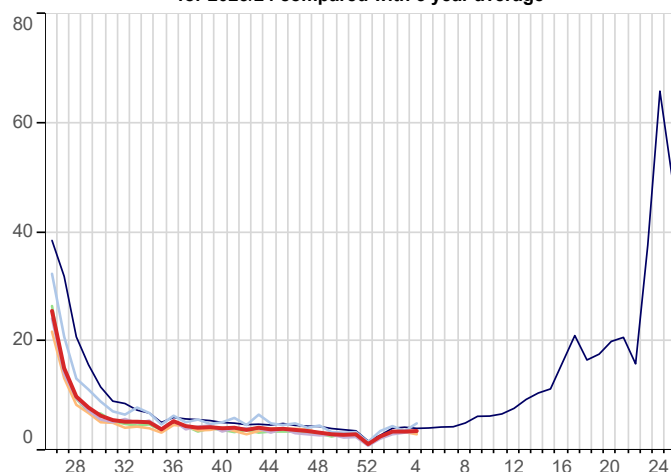
Asthma (ICD10: J45-J46)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Disorders of Conjunctiva (ICD10: H10-H13)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



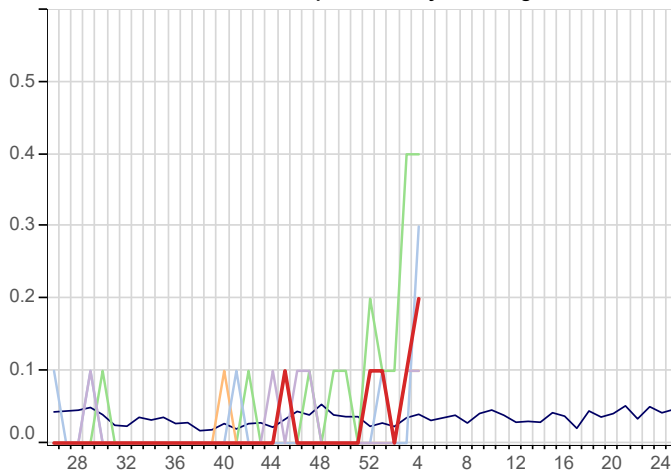
Hayfever/Allergic Rhinitis (ICD10: J30)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



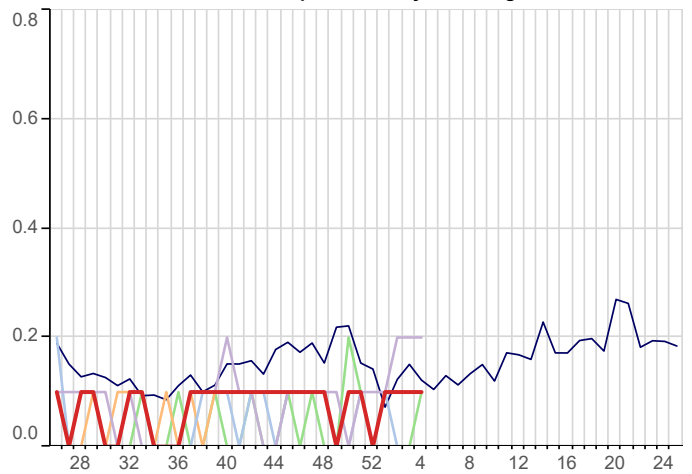
4. Vaccine Sensitive Disorders

5yr Avg National North London South Midlands And East

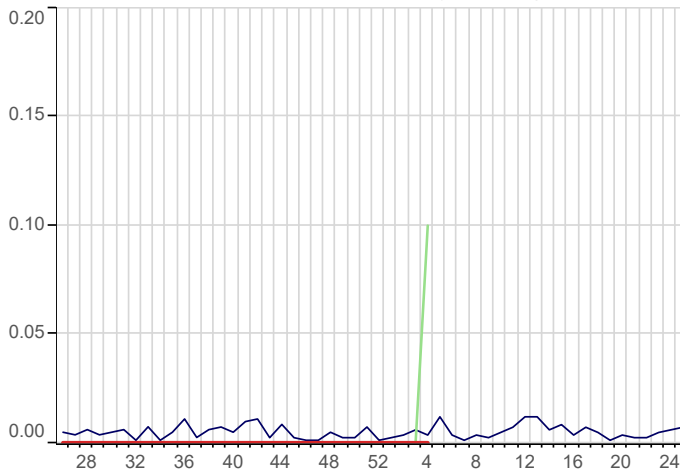
Measles (ICD10: B05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



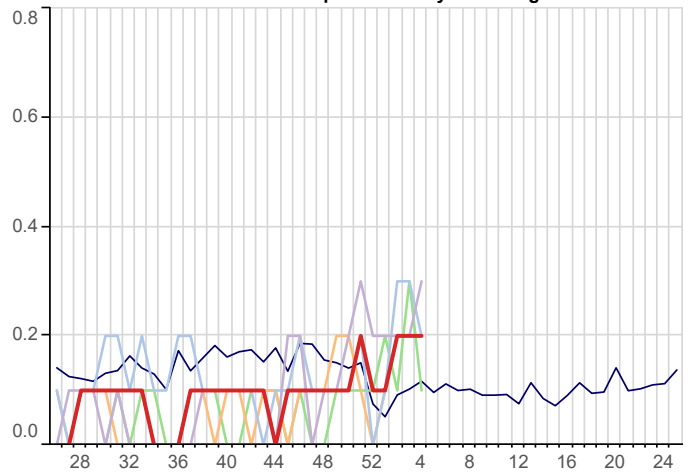
Mumps (ICD10: B26)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Rubella (ICD10: B06)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

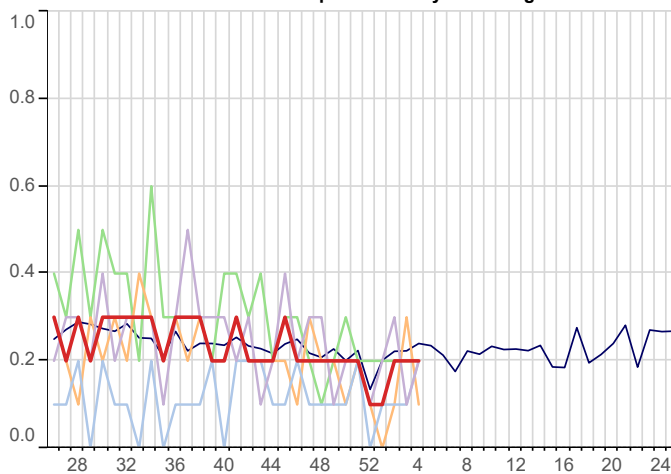


Whooping Cough (ICD10: A37)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

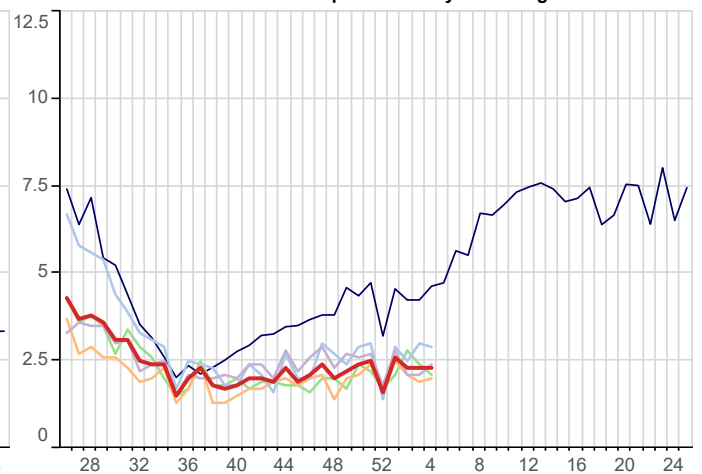


5. Skin Contagions

Bullous Dermatoses (ICD10: L10-L14)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



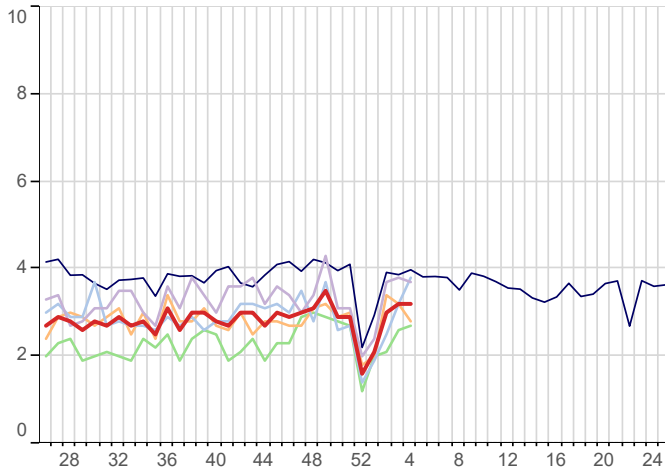
Chickenpox (ICD10: B01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



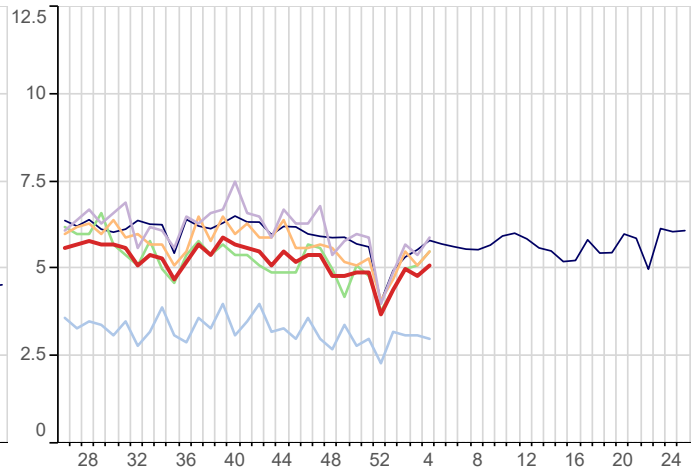
5. Skin Contagions (Continued)

5yr Avg National North London South Midlands And East

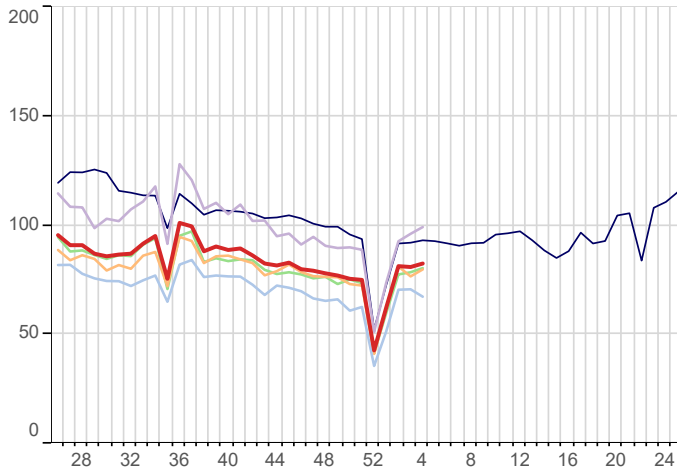
Herpes Simplex (ICD10: B00)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



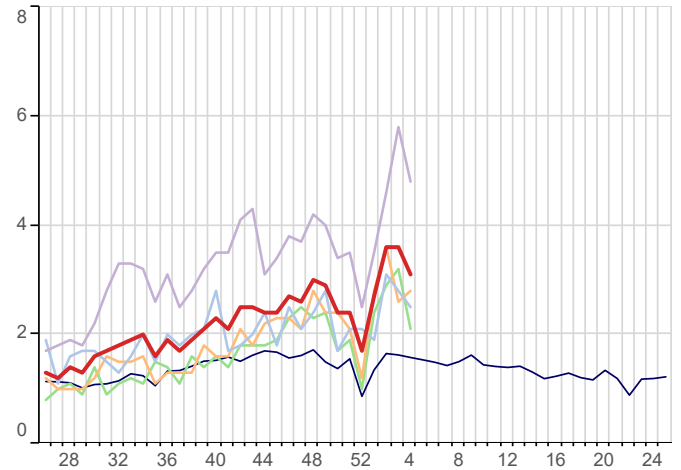
Herpes Zoster (ICD10: B02)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



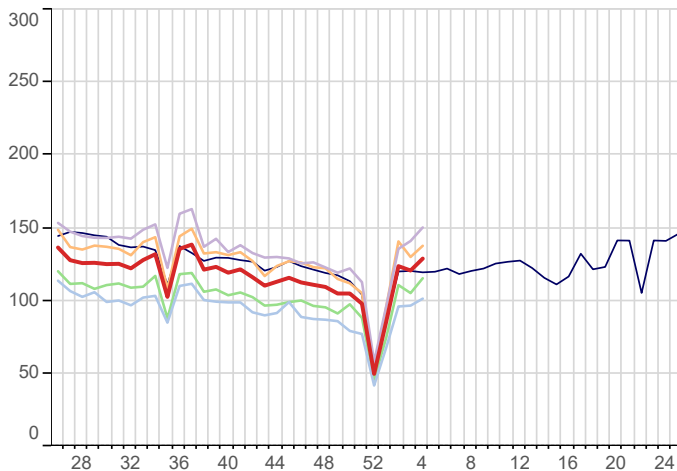
Infections of Skin & Subcutaneous Tissue (ICD10: L00-L08)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



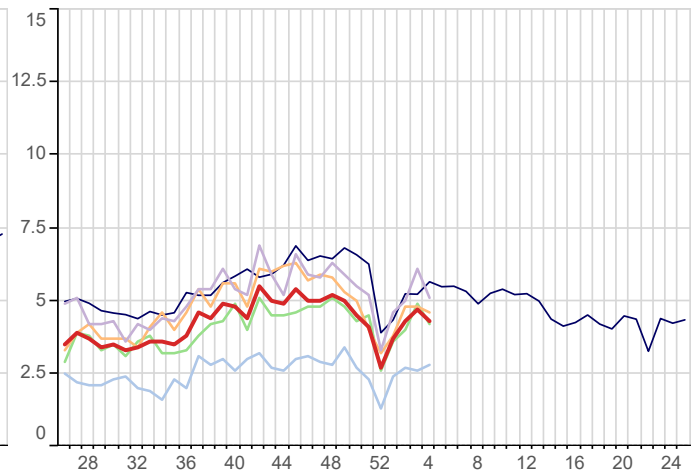
Scabies (ICD10: B86)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Symptoms involving Skin & Oth Integument Tiss (ICD10: R20-R23)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



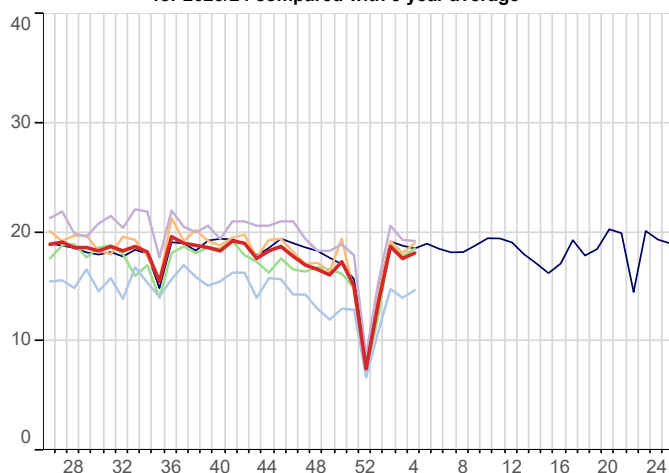
Impetigo (ICD10: L01)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



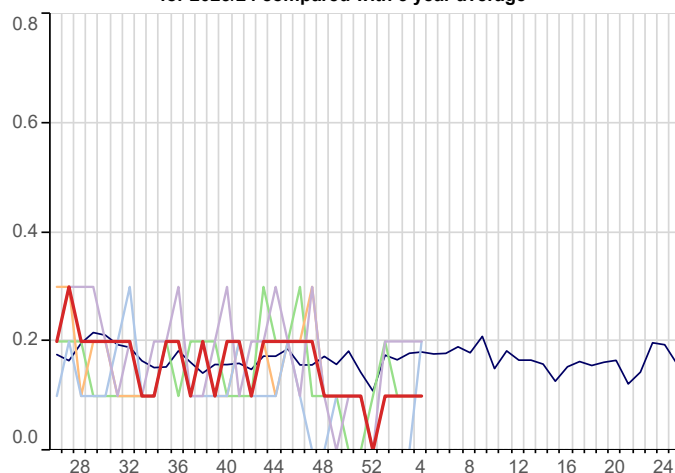
6. Disorders Affecting the Nervous System

5yr Avg National North London South Midlands And East

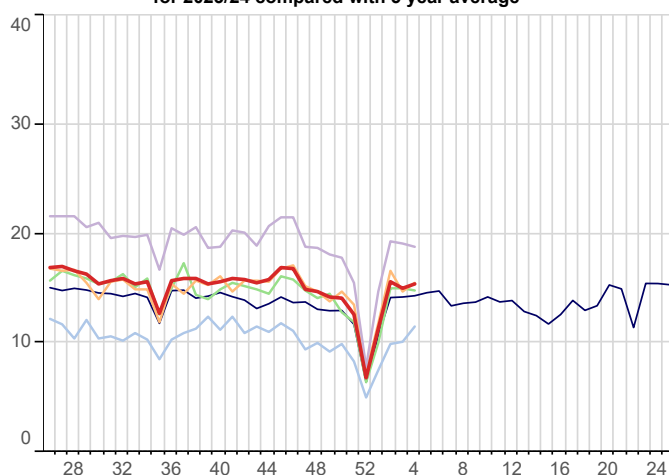
Disorders of The Peripheral Nervous System (ICD10: G50-G64,G70-G72)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Meningitis/Encephalitis (ICD10: A170-A171,A390,A38-A85,A87,G00-G05)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average

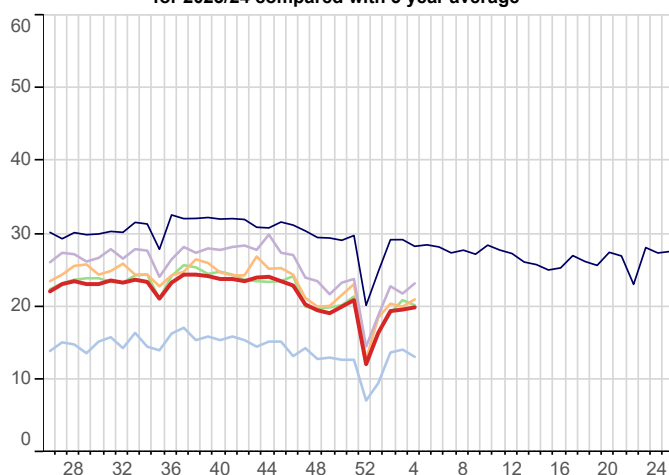


Symptoms Involving Nervous & Musculoskeletal (ICD10: R25-R29)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



7. Genitourinary System Disorders

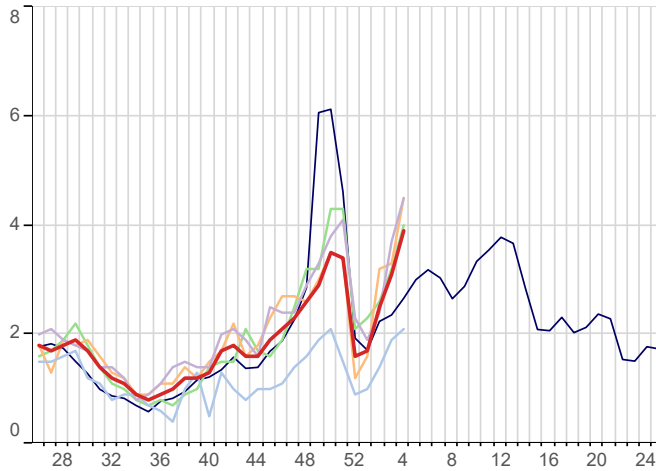
Urinary Tract Infection/Cystitis (ICD10: N30,N390)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



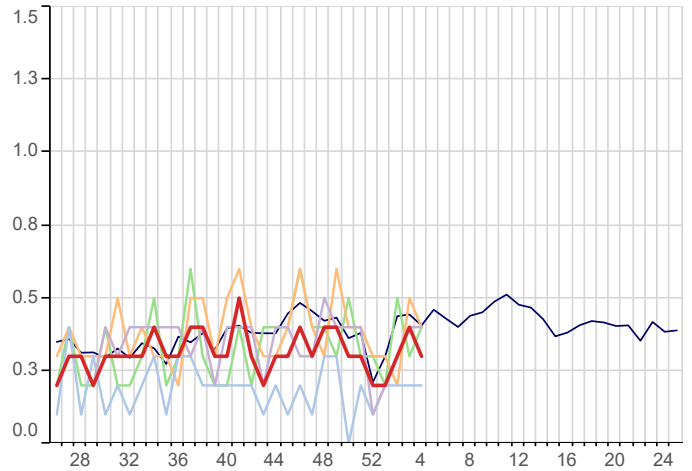
8. Other Disorders

5yr Avg National North London South Midlands And East

Strep Sore Throat, Scarlatina and Peritonsillar Abscess (ICD10: A38,J020,J36)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



Infectious Mononucleosis (ICD10: B27)
Weekly incidence (per 100,000 all ages) by region
for 2023/24 compared with 5 year average



8. Tabular Summary by Disease

Disease Name	Week beginning Week ending		22/01/2024 28/01/2024		15/01/2024 21/01/2024		08/01/2024 14/01/2024		01/01/2024 07/01/2024	
	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer	Rate	Numer
Acute Bronchitis	3.0	510	3.2	551	3.3	517	3.7	626		
Acute respiratory infections (ARI)	375.5	64,383	337.0	57,655	354.7	56,332	350.1	59,721		
Allergic Rhinitis	3.6	612	3.5	593	3.5	555	2.6	436		
Asthma	13.3	2,274	13.3	2,272	12.9	2,056	9.3	1,578		
Bronchiolitis	2.2	383	1.9	327	2.1	327	2.8	475		
Bullous Dermatoses	0.2	29	0.2	32	0.2	25	0.1	16		
Chickenpox	2.3	392	2.3	394	2.3	367	2.6	437		
Conjunctival Disorders	16.9	2,904	16.0	2,745	15.7	2,489	12.4	2,110		
COVID-19	12.2	2,099	11.5	1,975	13.0	2,060	16.5	2,819		
Croup	3.4	583	2.4	418	1.8	284	1.2	212		
ECLD - Asthma exacerbations	8.7	1,489	8.1	1,380	8.9	1,421	9.2	1,564		
ECLD - COPD exacerbations	6.6	1,126	7.1	1,208	7.4	1,178	7.8	1,338		
Exacerbations of chronic lung disease	15.3	2,624	15.2	2,605	16.5	2,616	17.2	2,938		
Herpes Simplex	3.2	549	3.2	550	3.0	476	2.1	356		
Herpes Zoster	5.1	877	4.8	820	5.0	790	4.4	749		
Impetigo	4.3	733	4.7	809	4.3	679	3.7	629		
Infectious Intestinal Diseases	7.4	1,261	6.7	1,143	6.2	983	4.9	829		
Infectious Mononucleosis	0.3	60	0.4	62	0.3	48	0.2	42		
Influenza-like illness	9.8	1,687	7.5	1,284	8.0	1,269	7.5	1,273		
Laryngitis	1.4	234	1.5	250	1.5	246	1.5	264		
Lower respiratory tract infections	128.2	21,978	126.2	21,592	144.1	22,880	144.4	24,637		
Measles	0.2	32	0.1	25	0.0	2	0.1	10		
Meningitis and Encephalitis	0.1	23	0.1	19	0.1	19	0.1	21		
Mumps	0.1	18	0.1	15	0.1	13	0.1	10		
Non-infective Enteritis and Colitis	3.0	508	2.8	474	2.6	416	1.9	325		
Otitis Media	26.5	4,552	21.9	3,749	21.7	3,453	20.1	3,431		
Peripheral Nervous Disease	18.1	3,106	17.6	3,003	18.7	2,966	13.5	2,303		
Pneumonia	3.9	669	4.2	714	4.7	741	4.6	787		
Rubella	0.0	2	0.0	1	0.0	0	0.0	0		
Scabies	3.1	534	3.6	616	3.6	573	2.7	463		
Sinusitis	23.0	3,946	21.8	3,724	25.0	3,974	24.0	4,087		
Skin and Subcutaneous Tissue Infections	82.5	14,147	80.9	13,837	81.3	12,916	62.4	10,645		
Strep Throat and Peritonsillar Abscess	3.9	673	3.1	530	2.5	396	1.7	296		
Symptoms involving musculoskeletal	15.4	2,644	15.0	2,575	15.6	2,485	11.3	1,928		
Symptoms involving Skin and Integument Tissues	129.0	22,120	120.8	20,667	123.8	19,668	85.9	14,656		
Tonsillitis/Pharyngitis	48.2	8,265	41.7	7,143	38.6	6,126	36.4	6,201		
Upper respiratory tract infections	228.4	39,166	193.2	33,060	190.9	30,326	181.1	30,890		
Urinary Tract Infections	19.9	3,404	19.6	3,347	19.4	3,087	16.4	2,800		
Viral Hepatitis	0.3	43	0.3	48	0.2	35	0.2	30		
Whooping Cough	0.2	38	0.2	40	0.2	29	0.1	23		
Practice Count		1,694		1,692		1,578		1,682		
Denom		17,148,209		17,110,623		15,881,902		17,058,343		

FURTHER INFORMATION:

About the report

Focus

The first two pages of data within this report focus on influenza-like illness and virology data, in order to provide information about seasonal influenza and early warnings of any epidemic.

Rate calculation

Each weekly incidence rate is presented per 100,000 population. All presentations are for males and females, and for all age bands, unless otherwise stated.

The denominator used for this report is taken from our most recent extract of data from GP practice systems, and includes all patients currently registered with eligible practices. The denominator varies week-on-week as patients register and deregister; it may also be the case that all patients from an individual practice are excluded because of problems with the data extraction from that practice in a specific week. As stated above, patients who have withheld consent for data-sharing are excluded.

In addition to the national rate, we present data for the four NHS England regions: North; Midlands and East; South; and London.

Five-year averages

Weekly rates are set against a five-year average (navy blue lines), previously we reported against a ten-year average. The change to a five-year average was made because longer-term trends in the incidence of disease have led to weekly rates for certain diseases becoming increasingly divergent from their ten-year average. The use of five-year averages lessens this effect and enables more meaningful comparison.

Threshold calculation for influenza-like illness (ILI)

We are now using the Moving Epidemic Method (MEM) to calculate threshold and intensity levels for influenza-like illness (Graph A, page 2 and Table E, page 4 of this report). MEM works by identifying seasonal epidemic peaks and then calculates thresholds and intensity levels based on the pre and post epidemic values. This allows us to report the severity of ILI against multiple thresholds, rather than a simple comparison with the five-year average as the wide variation in ILI year on year, especially during the seasonal peak, makes the average less representative.

In addition to the All Ages thresholds, we have also calculated thresholds for four age bands: those aged 1-4, 5-14, 15-64 and those aged 65 and over. ILI incidence rates vary among different age bands, and the age-specific thresholds allow us to highlight epidemics where ILI disproportionately affects a particular age band.

This methodology is used by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to standardise reporting of influenza activity across Europe, and is also in use by the UK Health Security Agency. Full details of the methodology can be found in: Vega *et al.* (2012) Influenza surveillance in Europe: establishing epidemic thresholds by the moving epidemic method. Influenza and Other Respiratory Viruses 7(4), 546–558.

Both the *all-ages* thresholds and the *age-specific* thresholds are shown in Table E, page 4. Five years of data were used for *all-ages* and *age-specific* thresholds calculation (winter seasons 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2022/23, excluding 2019/20, 2020/21 and 2021/22).

About the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) Research and Surveillance Centre (RSC)

Acknowledgement:

Staff from the Data Science department at the National Physical Laboratory (<https://www.npl.co.uk/data-science>) assisted in the provision of and extension of the primary care national surveillance reports during the 2020 SARS-CoV-2 pandemic; as well as adding resilience.

What we do

The RCGP RSC was established in 1957, with the current name in use since 2009. The Centre is an internationally renowned source of information, analysis and interpretation concerning the onset, patterns, prevalence and trends over time of morbidity in primary care. The RSC is an active research and surveillance unit that collects and monitors data; its most important research is the surveillance of influenza and the monitoring of vaccine effectiveness.

The RSC data and analytics hub is housed at the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre.

Further information about the RSC can be found on our website:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc>

Our data extraction process and information governance

Data are extracted twice weekly from practice systems by Magentus data management and EMIS-X Analytics (EXA) on the RCGP's behalf. Patients who have withheld consent for data sharing are excluded from the extraction process.

Data are pseudonymised as close to source as possible. Data are held on secure servers at the RCGP data and analytics hub at the Oxford-Royal College of General Practitioners Research and Surveillance Centre. Both Magentus data management and the University of Oxford are Registered and compliant with the Data Protection Act and fully compliant with all relevant NHS Digital data information governance best practice.

What the data is used for

The RCGP RSC has been providing reports weekly about health and disease, called the Weekly Returns Service (WRS) since 1964. The WRS monitors the number of patients consulting with new episodes of illness classified by diagnosis in England and provides weekly incidence rates per 100,000 population for these new episodes of illness. It is the key primary care element of the national disease monitoring systems run by the UK Health Security Agency. The bulletin can be found at the following URL:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/syndromic-surveillance-systems-and-analyses>

In addition to the WRS, the data is used for other research studies. Any other uses of the data for research follow ethical approval or agreement from NIHR proportionate review, and where relevant Health Research Authority Confidential Advisory Group advice that further approval is not needed. Full details can be found on our website:

<http://www.rcgp.org.uk/rsc>

For further information

For further information about the work of the RSC, or if you would like to be included on our email notification list, please contact:

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